

Principal: Pat Neenan
Deputy Principal: Ella O' Sullivan
Assistant Principal: Niamh Cronin
info@ballydesmondns.ie



An Scoil Náisiúnta Baile Deasumhan
Mala,
Co. Chorcaí
P51 CF30
064 7751351

14/08/2020

Dear Parent(s)/ Guardian(s),

We write today to provide a further update regarding our return to the school building on August 27th. Re-opening the school safely will require the co-operation of all members of our School Community – BoM, School Leadership, Staff, Parents and Pupils. We will all be called on to play our part in ensuring that re-opening of the school is done in a safe manner which helps prevent the spread of the virus and allows the vital work of Teaching and Learning to proceed with as little disruption as possible.

We have been working on our plan for the safe reopening of the school for some weeks now, and on Wednesday August 19th, we will publish three important documents to our school website:

1. The Ballydesmond NS COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of our school.
2. An updated Risk Assessment for Ballydesmond NS.
3. The Ballydesmond NS Covid-19 Policy statement.

Some specific updates that I would like to draw your attention to are as follows:

- The BoM have made arrangements for the employment of additional cleaning staff.
- A deep clean of the school has been scheduled for next week.
- The BoM have set up an epayments facility via the Aladdin Connect app. All money collections (Book rental/Insurance etc) will now need to be paid via the link that you will be provided. (New parents will be provided with a link to sign up to Aladdin connect in the coming weeks)
- Hand sanitisers have been purchased and are being installed at the following locations:
 - All entrances to the building(s)
 - Outside and inside all classrooms
 - Common areas such as hallways
- Child friendly and portable hand sanitisers will also be in place for children to sanitise their hands before entering the building(s)
- An ample supply of hand sanitiser has been secured.
- Floor markings and signage to encourage social distancing and correct hand hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette will be displayed prominently.
- Every class will have their own individual entrance to the building to protect the integrity of class bubbles.
- New procedures for the drop off and collection of pupils is being finalised and will be released on Tuesday Aug 18th as part of the Response Plan. **However, I can at this point confirm that we will not be implementing staggered opening times.**

RE: Physical Distancing and Safe School Attendance

As referenced above, we are currently working on upgrading our procedures and routines within the school to ensure that there is as much Physical Distancing as is possible in our building. We will apply physical distancing in a practical and sensible way, recognising that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue.

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Physical Distancing will be achieved in two ways:

Increasing Separation. This will be achieved by re-configuring the classrooms to maximise physical distancing. Each class will be referred to as a bubble and we will ensure that there is as little contact as possible between children in different bubbles. Within the bubbles, children will be organised into pods. A pod is a group of children (normally 4-6) who will sit together and who will stay in their pod while in the bubble, or classroom. (*This will not apply to 5th and 6th who will have the space in the hall for individual desks)

Decreasing Interaction. This will be achieved by decreasing the potential for children from different bubbles to interact. There will be marked routes for various bubbles to enter and exit the school and to access their classrooms. Bubbles will have designated play areas where they will not interact with any other bubble. We will make these routines enjoyable activities for the children, emphasising safety at all times.

While all children will be welcome back to school, we would remind parents that, where children are displaying colds, coughs or flu like symptoms, they should not be sent to school. Children who display such symptoms in school will be isolated and parents asked to collect them from the school.

Children who have travelled from countries not on the Green List should not attend school during the 14-day self-isolation period

Further information on COVID-19 symptoms in children is available at: -
<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/if-your-child-has-symptoms.html>

Teachers will make children aware of the proper hygiene procedures regarding hand washing and etiquette related to sneezing, coughing or spitting. We would be grateful if you could also emphasise safe behaviour in this regard to your children at home as part of the preparation for returning to school.

Our aim remains to re-open the school in an orderly and safe manner, while reassuring the children and making them feel comfortable, safe and relaxed with their friends in the new school environment. This will be achieved by all of us working towards this common goal.

Le meas

Paddy Fleming
Cathaoirleach, An Bhóird Bainistíochta

Pat Neenan
Príomhoide